

Gloucestershire Airport Sale Raises Alarm Over £250 Million Development Potential

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— Categories: Real Estate



Staverton, June 26, 2025 – The proposed sale of Gloucestershire Airport has triggered growing concern among residents and stakeholders, as fears mount that the 350-acre site could eventually be redeveloped for housing and commercial use despite official assurances to the contrary.

Jointly owned by Cheltenham Borough Council and Gloucester City Council, the airport is being marketed as a “going concern,” with aviation use protected through restrictive covenants. However, critics argue that once the site’s ongoing financial losses are

reaffirmed under private ownership, it could be reclassified and repurposed, unlocking a potential development value estimated at £250 million.

Listed with a guide price of £25 million, the airport includes two runways, a terminal building, air traffic control tower, fire station, hangars, and fuel infrastructure. It also generates rental income from two business parks and holds valuable development land, including the CGX site, which already has planning consent for 30,000m² of employment space.

Despite being one of the UK's busiest general aviation airports with approximately 65,000 aircraft movements recorded in 2024 Gloucestershire Airport has long struggled to remain commercially viable. Reports indicate annual losses of around £3 million on a turnover of £3.5 million, prompting criticism over decades of taxpayer support.

“Once the airport is proven unviable again, the value of the land as a real estate asset will far exceed its worth as an operational airfield,” a local resident wrote in a letter to the Echo and Citizen. “The councils have subsidised this site for years while vital public services suffer.”

Adding to the concern, business aviation activity at the airport has declined by 26% since 2015, according to Civil Aviation Authority figures. Recent increases in landing fees have also been met with pushback from users, casting doubt on the site's ability to attract sufficient aviation traffic under private ownership.

Council leaders maintain that the airport's aviation future is protected, but many remain unconvinced. As the vote on the sale proceeds today, critics argue the transaction may ultimately prioritise short-term relief over long-term strategic planning.

Cheltenham Borough Council and Gloucester City Council have declined to comment ahead of the decision. The outcome may shape not only the future of local aviation, but the wider economic and developmental landscape of Gloucestershire for years to come.